



STATEHOUSE OBSERVER

Published by Nebraska State Personnel — Department of Administrative Services

2003

January

February

March

In this issue...

In the Line of Duty	1
NIS Update	2
Wildlife Fund	3
Environmental Quality	4
New Savings Bond Plan	4
Food Drive	5
Recycling News	6
Safety Committee	7
IIF	8
Calendar	8



In the Picture from Left to Right -- James Nichols, Jennifer Westwood, Ellen Fochtman, Bridget Oliva. Photo provided by Department of Corrections.

In the Line of Duty

The Department of Corrections recently awarded the 2002 “In the Line of Duty Award.” This award goes to staff members who have demonstrated exceptional performance of duty beyond that required in life threatening or dangerous situations.

The 2002 awardees include:

- Jennifer Westwood, Staff Training Specialist, Staff Training and Development
- Bridget Oliva, Corporal, Lincoln Correctional Center
- James Nichols, Corporal, Lincoln Correctional Center
- Ellen Fochtman, Officer, Lincoln Correctional Center

These individuals saved the life of a seven-week-old infant, who had stopped breathing in the visiting room. This group of staff reacted to this emergency in an extremely efficient manner. One of the staff members placed an immediate call to the “911” emergency number. The other staff members assisted the child’s mother with rescue breathing until the child started breathing again on its own. Their quick reaction saved the infant’s life.



NIS Activity Summary

by Charles Roberson

It continues to be one hectic, exciting, and sometimes stressful time here at NIS. While there is still a great deal of work ahead to have NIS fully functional, we still reached several milestones over the last quarter.



Payroll: Checks processed using the NIS software were printed and distributed for both bi-weekly and monthly employees. The new pay stubs take some getting used to, but most of the information contained in them is accurate. The HR/Payroll team is still working diligently to correct any errors and to streamline procedures. If you have any problems with your pay and/or leave balances, be sure to check with your agency HR/Payroll representative or the IMS Help Desk at 402-471-4636.

Security Briefings: A series of information sessions on the structure of NIS security were held in January. Dwane Rauscher, head of NIS Security, gave a detailed explanation of the security set up and answered a myriad of questions from agency representatives. No further sessions are planned at this time, but employee interest may dictate more meetings. The questions from the sessions are posted on the NIS web site: <http://www.das.state.ne.us/nis/>, as are the definitions of address book abbreviations and an explanation of business units.

Training Update: We are gearing up for Procurement training and we need trainers! If you can help, please contact Francine T. Bash at 402-471-1414. We are doing some retraining in the Financials area and some specialized training for individuals who use the JAWS tool. Check the on-line registration at <http://www.das.state.ne.us/nis/training/> for current class listings.

The NIS Practice Environment: The NIS Practice Environment is now available on the NIS Web site. This environment will provide an opportunity for individuals to practice using NIS.

To get into the environment go to www.nis.ne.gov — click on “NIS Practice.” Next “Click here to access NIS Practice Login.” Use your Agency Practice ID and password.

One ID and password have been assigned to each agency. Only one person can use the ID to login to the Practice Environment at any point in time. Coordinate ID and password authority within your agency. Your agency training contact will have the ID and password. That individual will be responsible for tracking use and for any changes to the password.

The data available in the NIS Practice Environment is similar to what individuals saw during the Training courses. As individuals are practicing,

they can add or change data as they work through the various functions of the system. However, the security in the Practice Environment allows agencies to see data entered by other agencies. Any new data entered during the week will be deleted when the environment is “refreshed” over the weekend. The refresh process cleans out any data so agencies can start fresh each week.

NIS Troubleshooting: When you encounter a problem within NIS, attempt to resolve the problem by talking with others who are familiar with the system. If you are unable to resolve the problem (and it is not a security ID or password problem as referenced above), call the IMS Help Desk to log the issue. Calls to the Help Desk dealing with the Production environment will be given first priority, and then Help Desk staff will address Practice environment calls.

For additional information, contact your agency Training Contact. A list of Training Contacts is available on the NIS Web site.

NIS Authorized Agents: As we move forward with NIS, we are creating a central point of contact for each agency - the Authorized Agent. The Authorized Agents are “a clearinghouse for information coming into NIS regarding employees that are being hired, changed, or terminated in the system,” according to Ruth Johnston of NIS Security. This includes re-activation of passwords for

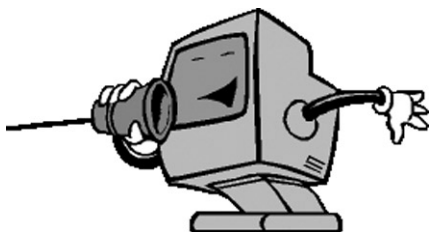
NIS web site: <http://www.das.state.ne.us/nis/>
IMS Help Desk: 402-471-4636.

employees who have trouble getting access into the system. By having the Authorized Agents available, we are able to verify employee information quickly and have a secure way of giving out information to the agencies. Again, Ms. Johnston: "We don't have a signature to look at - there is no paper. We are using the Authorized Agents as a way to verify information."

Agencies are being encouraged to let their people know who their particular Authorized Agent is, but if you want to find out on your own, all you have to do is contact the IMS Help Desk at 471-4636 and they can tell you, or you can talk to your agency's HR representative.

Be sure to check the NIS web site for weekly updates on a variety of topics, especially as we get closer to go-live with the Financials portion of the NIS software. Remember, if you have any questions or comments on any aspect of NIS, you can utilize the FAQ section of the web site.

Thanks for all of your patience and hard work as we continue to implement this large, complex software system. The effort of all State of Nebraska employees is greatly appreciated and that effort is showing tremendous results!



Don't Forget Wildlife at Tax Time

For most people, filling out your state income tax form is little cause for excitement. However, you might make filing state taxes a little more joyful by contributing all or a portion of your refund to the state non-game and endangered species program.

Proceeds from the non-game tax check-off (line 13 on your state income tax form) is the principal means of funding for the more than 2,000 species of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, and plants that are not hunted or fished. Many of these species are exceedingly rare or experiencing serious declines.

Although voluntary contributions to the check-off peaked at \$120,000 in the mid 1990s, in recent years donations have declined to less than \$80,000. The decline in check-off funding may be due in part to smaller refunds or because fewer individuals prepare their own taxes. Whatever the reason, the decline in funding is making it more difficult for the Game and Parks Commission to conserve non-game species.

Since the inception of the check-off, projects benefiting dozens of non-game species have been completed. One of the more higher profile projects was the reintroduction of river otters to Nebraska. Once completely eliminated from the state, river otters are now known to occur on six of Nebraska's thirteen river basins. If their population continues to increase, river otters may one day be removed from the state endangered species list. The success of this project is a tribute to the generosity of those who have contributed to the check-off program.

Other projects funded by the non-game tax check-off program include the successful reintroduction of peregrine falcons, a flying squirrel nest box and monitoring program, development of a partnership to monitor birds in Nebraska's shortgrass prairie, a study of the ornate box turtle, the start-up of a prairie restoration cooperative, a survey of the Topeka shiner and numerous other projects.

For the first time this year, individuals may make their donation on-line by using the Game and Parks Commission secure server. Donations can be made by credit card by visiting the Commission's web site at

www.outdoornebraska.org/wildlife/ngdonate.html. For more information about the non-game check-off contact Mark Humpert, Wildlife Diversity Program Manager, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission (402)471-5438 or by e-mail at mhumpert@ngpc.state.ne.us



Save Water Now

Big parts of Nebraska are in a drought. Last year some parts of the state received less than half of the normal rainfall. Some areas received less than 8 inches of rain. **Each** American household uses in excess of 476,000 gallons of fresh water a year. Across the country we drink an average of 1 billion glasses of tap water per day. What steps can we take to save water now so that we can have more water for the future?

There are some easy things you can do. You can turn water off when you are not using it. Do not let it just run while brushing your teeth, shaving, cooking or cleaning. Just turn it on when you actually need it.

Next look at how water is used outside. Cut down on washing your family car or cars. If you have a yard, look at how the yard is watered and consider only watering it every second or third day instead of every day.

Work on detecting and fixing leaky faucets. Fixing a silent toilet leak may save as much as 500 gallons per day.

Look at ways to

reuse water every day. How about taking water you don't drink from glasses and instead of dumping it in the sink, put it in a pitcher or container to water plants.

There are more complicated options available to save water. Installing high efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances can help a typical family of four reduce indoor water use by one-third, save about \$95 per year on their water and sewer bill, and cut energy use by as much as six percent. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each new high-tech clothes washer can save 7,000 gallons of water per year.

There are other benefits to these new clothes washers. Water heating accounts for 19 percent of home energy use. If 20 percent of U.S. homes used high efficiency clothes washers, national energy savings could be 285 billion BTUs per day – enough to supply the needs of over one million homes. BTU stands for British



thermal unit and is the amount of energy needed to raise the temperature of one pound (about a pint) of water one degree Fahrenheit.

We cannot control how much rain we get, but we can control how we use the water. Choose a way to save water now and we will have more to use in the future. For additional Pollution Prevention information go to the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ne.us and select Programs/Environmental Assistance Program/Pollution Prevention Program.

New Savings Bond Plan

We are proud to announce our new U.S. Savings Bond Program administered by National Bond & Trust Company (NBT). NBT is a licensed issuing agent of the U.S. Treasury and currently administers savings bond programs for thousands of employers across the country, including several other state governments.

In addition to

offering the Series EE Bonds, our new program will also allow employees to purchase the new Series I Bonds.

Series I U.S. Savings Bonds are guaranteed by the U.S. Government to pay a rate of return over and above inflation. The current rate is 4.08%. They will be available to our employees with the introduction of the program.

Now, through payroll deduction, our State of Nebraska employees can save some of their hard-earned money in a place so safe, not even inflation can touch it!

Representatives of National Bond & Trust are looking forward to working with all of you to promote this benefit to all State of Nebraska employees. The program will be administered through small drives at locations across the state. More details are pending. Contact Keri Nicholson with your questions.

knichol@notes.state.ne.us
(402) 471-4112



Food Bank Drive

This year's Food Drive will run from April 7–18. In these tough times of drought and recession, it is all the more important that we help out those in need.

In 2002, the Food Bank of Lincoln distributed 2,324,700 pounds of food, an all time record. That averages out to 5,095 meals a day. (The average meal is 1.25 pounds of food)

The 2002 value of the food they distributed was \$3,928,743. The Food Bank is able to distribute \$7.60 worth of food for every dollar that comes into the Food Bank.

What can you do to help?

For a child to be fed by the Food Bank, here is what we figure:

- A child eats 25 pounds a week.
- This equals a hundred pounds a month give or take a few.
- The value of the food provided is judged to be \$1.69 a pound = \$169.00 a month
- The Food Bank is able to distribute \$7.60 worth of food for every dollar that comes into the Food Bank.
- For less than \$25.00 a month to the Food Bank of Lincoln, you could feed a child at the Friendship Home, an elderly person on a fixed income who receives food boxes from the Indian Center, a homeless person who depends on the Matt Talbot Kitchen, a teen mom and her baby who is taking classes at the YWCA.

The Food Bank serves Lincoln, Lancaster County, and 15 additional counties in Southeast Nebraska. They provide assistance to:

- 27 Emergency Providers (Pantries)
- 4 Soup Kitchens
- 7 Day cares
- 4 Shelters
- 13 agencies that provide multiple services (44 locations) LAP, PCM, Salvation Army, etc.
- 45 Residential locations
- 9 Youth programs (26 locations)
- 5 Rehab centers (11 locations)
- Red Cross

"The outrage of hunger amidst plenty will never be solved by "experts" somewhere. It will only be solved when people like you and me decide to act."

Francis Moore Lappe, author and activist





State Recycling News

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Why is it always Reduce (shop State Surplus Property), Reuse (binder relocation program) and Recycle in that order?

Answer: Reducing and reusing do not require the addition of any natural resources. While recycling does minimize the amount of virgin material required, some virgin material is required in the manufacture of recycled materials.

Please send us your favorite recycling tips on reduction and reuse. We will share them with the rest of our team.

We are currently recycling:

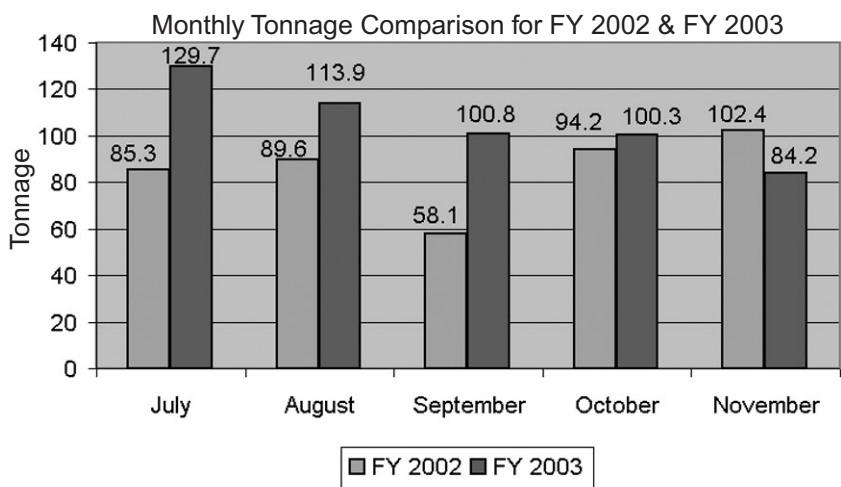
- ✏ Paper
- ✏ Toner Cartridges
- ✏ Cardboard
- ✏ Aluminum Cans
- ✏ Steel Cans
- ✏ Pallets
- ✏ Glass
- ✏ Telephone Directories
- ✏ Plastic
- ✏ Hard-Bound Books
- ✏ Batteries



REMINDER — Before recycling any state record, be sure it has reached its lawful disposal date. If you have any questions, contact your agency Record Officer or call the Records Management Division at 471-2559.

Progress Report

As you can see by the graph, we are still putting December numbers together, but the progress for the first five months of FY 2003 is tracking nicely. I feel confident that December will be a good month because of the telephone book collection (so far we have collected 19,500 lbs. of Lincoln telephone books). Fiscal year 2003 is emerging as the year of new ideas. We started collecting telephone books in fiscal year 2003 in Omaha (1,460 lbs.) and this was a first. We will also be organizing a telephone book collection effort in other cities across the state. If you would like to assist with this project, please call the Recycling Office.



State Phone Directories

Your new State phone directories are being printed. The State Recycling Office will have a page in the new 2003 directories right behind the floor plan of the State Capitol. This information will be coming soon to our web page: <http://www.das.state.ne.us/materiel/recycling>.

After you have received your new directories, please recycle your 2002 State directories. To recycle your State directories, remove the plastic rings. From the bottom, count approximately five loops, cut with scissors, and pull toward you and pull out. Note: You can increase or decrease the amount of loops, cut to your comfort level. Cutting every loop is messy and making one cut is difficult. When plastic is removed, place the entire book in your recycled paper box and dispose of the plastic in your trash can.

Note: If you don't have a box for recycled paper, please call Charlie Wink at 471-2431 or Bernice Petersen at 471-9162. These recycling boxes are free and we are happy to give you all that you need.

Anyone that has any thoughts, comments, suggestions and/or ideas regarding recycling, please contact our office. We would really like to hear from you.

Charlie Wink, Recycling Coordinator
402/471-2431
cwink@notes.state.ne.us
Bernice Petersen, Recycling Clerk

402/471-9162
bpeterse@notes.state.ne.us



Statewide Safety Committee

Mission: To promote a safe and healthy work environment for all Nebraska state employees.

The Statewide Safety Committee recommends that every State of Nebraska workplace promote the availability of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in each work location.

Because the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) can save lives of workers who experience cardiac arrest while on the job, the Statewide Safety Committee encourages each Agency to work toward making this equipment available in their workplaces. The American Heart Association and OSHA both encourage the use of AEDs in the workplace. Use of an AED within 3 minutes of cardiac arrest can increase the survival rate from less than 5 percent to nearly 75 percent. Immediate defibrillation can revive more than 90 percent of victims.

According to OSHA statistics, 815 deaths accounting for 13 percent of workplace fatalities reported over a two-year period were due to sudden cardiac arrest. Work factors that may aggravate or contribute to cardiovascular disease include chemical exposures, electrical hazards, extreme hot or cold, shift work, noise, and stress. Placing AEDs in workplaces could significantly increase survival rates. OSHA estimates that, assuming an average defibrillation of 5 minutes would produce a 40 percent survival rate, 160 lives per year could be saved.

AEDs are lightweight, run on rechargeable batteries, and are relatively easy to use. In a study of mock cardiac arrest, untrained sixth-grade students were capable of defibrillation within 90 seconds using

AEDs. The federal Public Health Improvement Act authorized placement of AEDs in federal buildings and provided immunity from civil liability for anyone using an AED in a federal building. Several State of Nebraska agencies have AEDs available in their facilities.

The Statewide Safety Committee encourages state agencies to work together to fund AEDs in state owned and leased workplaces. AEDs are becoming increasingly affordable. Having the devices appropriately located in the workplaces would improve cardiac arrest survival rates and safer work environment for State of Nebraska employees.

Keep yourself and your fellow employees safe by making workplace safety a priority. If you have any safety concerns or suggestions, please contact a member of your agency safety committee or the Statewide Safety Committee.

The current members of the Statewide Safety Committee are:

Labor

(appointed by NAPE/AFSCME)

Dawn Kowal, Co-chair
(402)595-3171
dkowal@dol.state.ne.us

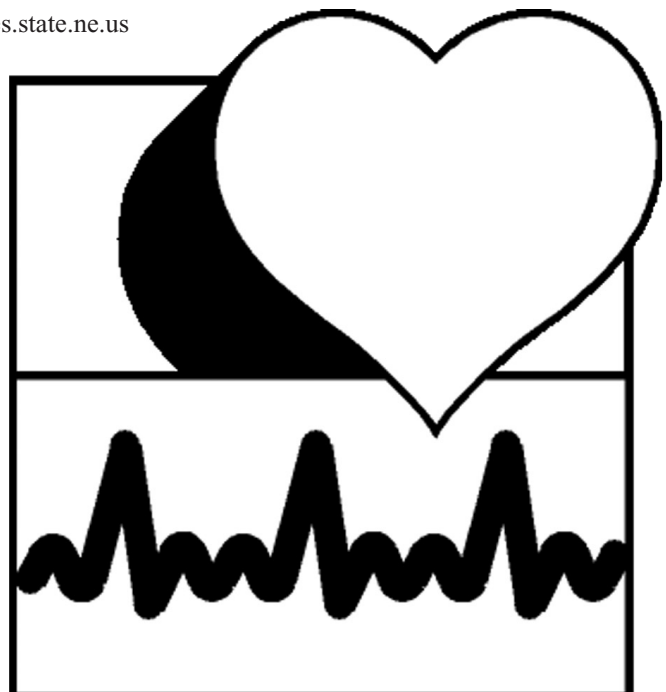
Bob Basoco
Karen Girch
Deanna Ewing
Kevin Petska
Elizabeth Noble

Management

(appointed by the Governor)

Mike Samuelson, Co-chair
(402)223-7541
msamuels@notes.state.ne.us

David Gates
Dale Busch
Bob Lundberg
Joe Hamblin
Randy Roberts
Tom Shepardson



IIF

(Interaction Informational Forum)

The upcoming IIF will be held Tuesday March 4, 2003. DAS-State Personnel will continue its series of discovery workshops for HR Professionals in the state workforce.

Doors open at 8:00 am, with refreshments provided. The program starts at 8:30 am and is scheduled to run until noon. The tentative agenda consists of:

- Pointers on helping staff embrace change (presentation by EAP)
- Round Table discussion activity
- Procurement of Contract Services changes (presented by Material division)
- NIS updates

Location:

Lancaster County Extension
Office

444 Cherrycreek Rd
Lincoln NE 68524



DAS-State Personnel links

State Personnel has a wealth of information online for use by employees and agencies. Make the internet your first stop when seeking information.

Employee Information

- **Benefits Information and Forms:**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/benefits/>
- **State Holiday Schedule**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/holidayschedule.htm>
- **State Suggestion System** (online form)
<http://www.wrk4neb.org/idea/>
- **Training Opportunities**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/nkn/>

Newsletters

- **Affirmative Action Quarterly**
http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/aa_newsletters.htm
- **Statehouse Observer**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/observer.htm>

Job Hunting

- **Apply for State jobs online:**
<https://www.wrk4neb.org/jobapp/>
- **Current vacancies**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/nejobs/per.htm>

Classification

- **Job Specifications**
<http://www.das.state.ne.us/empref/JobSpecs/>
- **Nebraska Classified System Personnel Rules**
<http://das.nol.org/personnel/nerules/>

Mark Your Calendar!

February

17 Presidents' Day
State Holiday

March

4 **IIF**
Lancaster County Extension Office

April

25 Arbor Day
State Holiday

May

26 Memorial Day
State Holiday

July

4 Independence Day
State Holiday

September

1 Labor Day
State Holiday

October

13 Columbus Day
State Holiday

November

10 Veterans Day
State Holiday

27 Thanksgiving
State Holiday

28 Day after Thanksgiving
State Holiday

STATEHOUSE OBSERVER

Editor:

Keri Nicholson

Director:

Mike McCrory

P.O. Box 94905, Lincoln, NE 68509
knichol@notes.state.ne.us
471-4112

Partnering with Agencies,
our State Personnel Team
is transforming State Government
to be the employer of choice.

Published by the State of Nebraska,
Department of Administrative Services-
State Personnel Division.

